



Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

copepod

representative species

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Arthropoda
Class: Maxillopoda

Features

Copepods are microscopic, cylindrical arthropods with six pairs of legs. The first pair of legs is used for feeding, while the others are used for swimming.

Natural History

Most copepods float near the surface of many types of water bodies as part of the plankton (microscopic organisms). They often migrate down in the water during the day and back to the surface at night, feeding on algae or other microscopic organisms. Some live near the bottom and are carnivores while others are fish parasites. They grow slowly, some species reproduce only once each year. Some species are found in large numbers during the winter. Others produce "resting eggs" to survive the winter that hatch in the spring. Carnivorous copepods produce cysts, reproductive structures that can survive harsh environmental conditions.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; wet prairies and fens; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs